

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Virginia

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 2, 2002

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United States Attorney Paul J. McNulty announced today that Sabuj Pattanayek, age 21, of Nashville, Tennessee, was sentenced to 41 months in federal prison by the Honorable T.S. Ellis III, United States District Judge, for conspiring to violate the criminal copyright laws as a member of one of the oldest and largest international software piracy rings on the Internet.

Sabuj Pattanayek, a student at Duke University, known by his screen nickname "buj," was a council member, and a highly skilled "cracker" for the online software piracy group known as DrinkOrDie. DrinkOrDie was a well-organized, security-conscious, Internet software piracy group that specialized in acquiring new software, "cracking" it (i.e., stripping or circumventing its copyright protections), and releasing the software over the Internet. DrinkOrDie consisted of approximately 65 group members from more than 12 countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Sabuj Pattanayek participated in virtually every aspect of the group's "release" work.

"This sentence should serve as a wake-up call to every young person who is tempted to squander the privilege of education and a promising future on the short-term notoriety of crime," said U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty.

DrinkOrDie's organizational structure classified group members in four categories in order of importance and responsibility: Leader or co-leader, Council, Staff, and general membership. Council and Staff members generally were the most active in the group's "release" work -- the process by which the group distributed software over the Internet in violation of the copyright laws. Members designated as "suppliers" provided new software to the group often days or weeks before the software was commercially available. Once software was supplied, highly skilled "crackers" would permanently defeat its copyright protections, thereby allowing the software to be illegally reproduced, distributed and used by anyone obtaining a copy. The "cracked" version would then be tested, packed, and rapidly distributed over the Internet to an ever-expanding web of illegal Internet sites worldwide. "Cracked" software released by DrinkOrDie has been found on pay-for-access websites in the U.S. and abroad, including China.

Pattanayek is among more than 40 individuals worldwide targeted by Operation Buccaneer, a 14-month undercover investigation by the U.S. Customs Service that represents the

largest international copyright piracy investigation to date by law enforcement. In addition to dismantling DrinkOrDie, Operation Buccaneer also netted members from a broad cross-section of leading online piracy groups.

To date in the Eastern District of Virginia, 12 defendants have pled guilty, six have been sentenced. Six defendants have been formally charged in the United Kingdom as a result of Operation Buccaneer. More prosecutions are expected in the U.S. and abroad, including Australia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

Prosecuting these cases for the United States are Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Wiechering; Michael DuBose, Senior Counsel, and Michael O'Leary, Trial Attorney, of the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, Department of Justice. The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Customs Service, including the Customs CyberSmuggling Center in Fairfax, VA, and the Washington RAIC Office in Fairfax, VA. Assistance was provided by several intellectual property trade associations, including but not limited to the Interactive Digital Software Alliance (IDSA) and the Business Software Alliance (BSA).